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Viewing cable 08BEIRUT681, LEBANON: MINDEF MURR MEETING ON 11 MAY 2008

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08BEIRUT681**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08BEIRUT681	2008-05-13 21:32	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Beirut

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/11352>
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O 132132Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1850
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2583
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIRUT 000681

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA

ALSO FOR A/S SILVERBERG AND PDAS WARLICK
NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/YEARGER/GAVITO
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/KUMAR/PHEE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2018

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SUBJECT: LEBANON: MINDEF MURR MEETING ON 11 MAY 2008

Classified By: CDA Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) In a May 11 meeting, Defense Minister Elias Murr told Charge that Hizballah fighters were moving into his neighborhood to take up positions around Michel Aoun's residence. Murr thinks that the incidents of 8-10 May prove that Army Commander Sleiman and Army Intelligence Chief Georges Khoury are "in the pocket" of Hizballah and that everyone has made a deal for their own benefit. Murr expressed an unwavering commitment to the government saying they (Hizballah) would have to enter his house and kill him before he gives up on the two cabinet decisions that led to Hizballah's actions on the streets of Beirut. Murr anticipates trouble among army officers, especially the Sunnis, based on the Army's performance in Beirut where they allowed Hizballah to take over Sunni-dominated West Beirut. Murr feels that Saudi Arabia and Egypt are the most important players to affect the current situation in Beirut, "if they are in the deal." Murr has been under increasing criticism from Lebanese politicians about his relationship with the USG saying his alliance has been a "failure" because there has been no real assistance to help Lebanon against Syria and Iran.

12. (C) Charge, accompanied by Defense Attach and PolOff, met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Elias Murr at his residence in Rabieh on Sunday, May 11 at 10:00 a.m.

HIZBALLAH IS JUST OUTSIDE MY WALLS
OVER 200 FIGHTERS MOVED IN LAST NIGHT

13. (C) Murr set the stage for our early Sunday morning by telling us about his newest neighbors. Evidently, Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) leader Michel Aoun has received 200 new body guards to protect his residence in Rabieh which is not far from Murr's home. These fighters had infiltrated into Rabieh on dirt tracks that were not guarded. Now, according to Murr, his nine year old daughter asks him, "who are those dirty men with beards outside?" (Comment. If Murr were really in distress about this new development, it is unlikely that he would still have his two children in the house while his ex-wife was out of the country. End Comment.)

14. (C) In addition to the 200 fighters around his house, Murr told us that he knew of an additional 400 fighters that had infiltrated the Dikwayne areas of the Metn. Murr assessed that all of these forces were being brought in to intimidate Amine Gemayel's Phalange Party and to prepare to cut the main highway leading north out of Beirut. (Note. Defense Attach noted a significant increase in the number of LAF armored vehicles deployed on this highway on the morning of 11 May. This was the first time Defense Attach has seen armored personnel carriers on this highway in the last two years. End Note.)

ARMY COMMANDER AND INTELLIGENCE CHIEF
IN HIZBULLAH'S BACK POCKET

15. (C) Murr, clearly upset with the LAF's lack of performance, told Charge that Sleiman was a "coward." Charge recalled USDP Edelman's question to Sleiman about a lack of LAF action leading to questions of either caution or collusion on the part of the LAF. Murr agreed saying, "these are Sleiman's three C's; caution, coward, collusion." (Note. Former President